

# High Levels of Respiratory Virus and Low Vaccine Rates Raises Public Health Dept. Concerns

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Oregon continues to experience high levels of respiratory virus activity, and COVID-19 continues to circulate throughout Oregon.

Before November 2022, approximately 400-700 vaccine doses were provided to residents each week in Clatsop County. Since November, only 100-200 doses have been administered every week.

Individuals vaccinated with the bivalent booster have a more than 18 times lower risk of dying from COVID 19 than unvaccinated people. The risk of becoming infected with COVID is also three times lower, according to CDC.

“We are concerned that booster rates in our senior population have not reached an optimal level. Less than one-third of individuals aged 60 and above have received the booster. For individuals age 80 and older, less than half of them have received the booster. Latinx individuals are still lag behind other races in getting the booster,” said Jiancheng Huang, public health department director.

Some people are at increased risk for severe COVID-19 infection and treatments are available to help reduce this risk including Paxlovid. Risk factors for severe disease include age— the risk increasing with age, underlying medical conditions and being under- or unvaccinated. Individuals from communities of color and tribal communities are more likely to become severely ill.

It is important for people at increased risk for severe COVID-19 infection to test themselves or get tested for COVID-19 in order to access treatment with Paxlovid. Paxlovid is available at no cost to eligible individuals through the federal [Test to Treat \(T2T\) program](#).

Free at home COVID tests can be ordered by calling 1-800-232-0233 or visiting the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website](#).

To inquire about COVID tests, vaccine bivalent booster doses, the primary series for those who are not yet vaccinated and the influenza vaccine, call Clatsop County Department of Public Health at 503-325-8500.